Voting: part of building a new nation

A Legal Scholar

The State Peace and Development Council is dedicating itself to the State’s seven-step Road Map it has laid down to transform the Union of Myanmar into a discipline-flourishing democratic nation. Under the fifth step of the Road Map, general elections will be held on 7 November 2010. So, the candidates to parliaments and electorates will play an important role in building the nation.

A voter is a national, regardless of sex and religion, who has attained 18 years of age on the day on which the election commences and is not disqualified by the provisions of the Election Law, or an associate citizen naturalized citizen, or holder of temporary certificate who is put on the Voting Roll. Respective township, ward or village-tract election sub-commissions have to make lists of voters in a systematic way in order that all the electorate can take part in the elections. Then, the Voting Rolls are to be on display on boards in public places. If a citizen eligible to vote finds that his name is not on the Voting Roll he may submit an application letter to put his name on the Voting Roll to the ward or village-tract election sub-commission concerned. And if he finds that an improper person is on the Voting Roll in his constituency, he may submit a complaint to revoke his name from the list Voting Roll.

Then, the ward or village-tract election sub-commission concerned has to deal with such cases in line with the Election Law. If the sub-commission refuses to do so, he may appeal to the township election sub-commission against the decision made by the ward or village-tract election sub-commission. It is therefore notable for the electorate that a citizen can participate in the election only if his name is on the Voting Roll.

When the Voting Roll is confirmed, the electorate in a constituency can vote in the polling station on the due date. If he has to be away from the constituency on the day the election is held, he may cast a vote in advance. The Election Commission and respective sub-commissions have to make necessary arrangements in accordance with the Election Law, regulations and directives in order that eligible voters who are outside the constituency concerned in the nation or who are abroad with the permission of the government can enjoy the voting right.

The polling booth officer, the deputy polling booth officer and members of the polling station appointed to supervise the voting process in the polling station by the township election sub-commission have to render assistance as necessary in order that eligible voters can cast secret ballots freely.

As soon as the voting process is completed, the polling booth officer or a member of the polling station assigned duties by the polling booth officer has to count the votes and the votes in advance received from the ward or village election sub-committee in front of the members of the polling station, the people and the voters. In that case, the polling booth officer has to record the names of at least ten witnesses including polling station members, people and representatives of the polling station. In addition, he has to make sure that the number of the ballot papers issued with his signature on them is equal to the number of the ballot papers in the ballot box.

The township election sub-commission has to add the votes sent by the ward or village election sub-committee and the votes in advance. Then, he has to declare the number of votes secured by each of the candidates. And the township election sub-committee has to make lists of the votes of the candidates with the designated forms in front of the people, and send the copy of the lists to the sub-committee concerned. According to the lists received, the Region or State Election Sub-Commission has to announce the candidate who has won votes most to the hluttaw concerned. A copy each of the announcements will be sent to the Union Election Commission. According to the announcements made by the Region or State Election Sub-Committee, the Union Election Commission will issue certificates to the representatives-elect and announce their names through the Myanmar Gazette. Then, the representatives-elect will be at the hluttaws concerned.

Voting is the right bestowed upon the electorate by the constitution. It is part of the process of building discipline-flourishing multi-party democratic nation. I would, therefore, like to urge the electorate to correctly elect candidates who hold in high esteem, who are role models, and who have sense of nationalistic spirit.

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Translation: MS